Message from the Administrator: 
A look back at Idaho’s 2017 Legislative Session

By Ross Edmunds, Division Administrator

The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) has had another successful year in working with the Legislature and the Governor’s Office to continue transforming the behavioral health system in Idaho.

DBH was able to move forward two sections of administrative rule. The first section creates the necessary infrastructure for certifying Family Support Partners and Certified Peer Specialists. The second makes necessary changes to the Children’s Mental Health rules to allow for the implementation of the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) system of care.

There was confusion on two of three pieces of legislation that ultimately...
caused too many questions for the Legislature to pass.

- The first was HB213, which made changes to membership of Regional Behavioral Health Boards, added definitions for Family Support Partner and Peer Specialist, and clarified the appointment authority for the Regional Behavioral Health Board. HB213 passed the House of Representatives but ultimately failed on the Senate floor.

- The second piece of legislation sought to change the required number of days from 30 to seven for the department to notify the court when a determination is made that restoration of competency cannot be completed for a patient. The Prosecutors Association, the Public Defenders Association, and the courts said seven days was not enough notice.

- The division was able to get passed legislation that simply added I.C. 18-212 to I.C. 66-609, which allows the department to comply with its statutory requirements of restoring patients to competence when they have mental health declarations directing their mental health care.

In addition to rules and legislation, the Legislature provided appropriations for several new projects:

- First is funding to continue the implementation of the YES project, including 18 new positions, funding for contracts with universities to assist in components of YES, and the establishment of a new income eligibility category in Medicaid for children with a serious emotional disturbance from 185 percent to 300 percent of the federal poverty limit.

- The department will receive funding to implement new treatment services for Idaho’s felony probation and parole population with serious mental illness.

- The Legislature provided continuation of funding for Residential Assisted Living Facilities caring for patients with serious and persistent mental illness as well as a pilot project to test a new intensive residential living program called Homes with Adult Residential Treatment (HART).

- The Legislature approved annualization of the funding necessary to fully fund the crisis centers in Twin Falls and Boise.

- In addition to funding for repair and replacement items at the two state psychiatric hospitals, the Legislature approved funding to increase salaries for physicians employed by the department, specifically at State Hospital South and State Hospital North.

- Lastly, and unfortunately, the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee (JFAC) did not approve a rate increase for the Substance Use Disorders provider network because of a misunderstanding among the Partners. Even so, JFAC did direct DHW, Idaho Department of Correction, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, and the Idaho Supreme Court to work together to bring a provider rate increase request forward for the 2018 legislative session.

Finally, the Legislature approved a 3 percent raise for state employees, based on merit. I expressed to the members of JFAC the incredible dedication, compassion, and selflessness of the division's employees in serving Idaho's residents with behavioral health disorders and thanked them for consideration of the Governor's recommended salary increase.
Idaho’s Response to the Opioid Epidemic (IROC)

By Rosie Andueza  
Program Manager

Last fall, the U.S. Congress approved the 21st Century Cures Act. A part of that legislation included $1 billion for combating the nation’s opioid epidemic. The funding was given to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) for distribution to the states. Based on a formula grant, Idaho is eligible to receive $2 million for one year (and possibly an additional $2 million for a second year), to reduce the prevalence of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), opiate-related overdoses and deaths in our state. The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) applied for this funding and is waiting to hear back from SAMSHA.

Idaho’s proposed project, named IROC (Idaho’s Response to the Opioid Crisis) includes a four-pronged approach that seeks to expand access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), reduce access to opioids through prevention efforts, enhance the recovery-oriented system of care, and reduce deaths.

Activities included in IROC include:

- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services for qualifying individuals.
- Collaboration with the Bureau of Pharmacy (BOP) and the Idaho Office of Drug Policy (ODP) on prevention activities, including: a new software program that gives prescribers feedback on their prescribing practices; establishing additional prescription drop-box programs in pharmacies throughout the state; and prescriber education.
- Enhancement of the current recovery-oriented system of care by using peers to work with individuals at risk of Opiate Use Disorder (OUD)-related adversities and relapse and improved access to sober recreational activities for individuals with OUD.
- Increased use of Naloxone to reverse opiate overdoses through training and provision of naloxone to first responders and others.

Division staff is busy designing the Medication Assisted Treatment program, collaborating with BOP and DOP on prevention activities and preparing a subgrant application for the enhanced peer services systems in preparation of receiving this funding. We will include articles on IROC in future newsletter publications. Stay tuned!

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

By Crystal Campbell  
Project Coordinator

May is a special month. Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week is celebrated the first week of May, and it is also Mental Health Awareness Month. In May, and throughout the year, Mental Health Awareness spreads the message that mental health is not something to hide or be ashamed of. Mental health affects everyone, and the Division of Behavioral Health wants people to know that mental illnesses are real, that recovery is always the goal, and there is help.

In honor of Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week and Mental Health Awareness Month.
Awareness Month, the Division of Behavioral Health will be recognizing one person with the first-ever Voice of Idaho Award. This award will be presented to a person with a mental illness who has made a systemic, community-based, or individual difference in reducing the stigma around mental health. In addition to the award, there will be several speakers at the May 11 event. Lt. Gov. Brad Little will present the 2017 Mental Health Awareness Month proclamation. More details are posted on the new Behavioral Health Events website. Along with the presentation, there will be a display of Mental Health Awareness-oriented stories, poems, photography, and other artwork in the Idaho State Capitol the day of the event. Photos of the display will be added to the Behavioral Health Events website. Flyers and release forms are located on the Behavioral Health Events website. Please share this opportunity with your community. The Division of Behavioral Health would also like your help in creating a stigma-free Idaho by visiting the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website. Individuals, companies, organizations and others can all take the pledge to learn more about mental illness, to see a person for who they are and take action on mental health issues. Take the pledge and raise awareness.

The new Behavioral Health Events website also has a community calendar for community-members to add Behavioral Health events throughout the year. Please visit the website to view events or to submit your own calendar event.

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**Todd Allen from SHS elected to national foundation board**

*From Press Release*

A psychiatric physician assistant (PA) at State Hospital South in Blackfoot, Todd Allen, MBA, MMS, PA-C, has been elected to the board of directors of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (nccPA) Health Foundation. His three-year term began in January.

The nccPA Health Foundation board of directors is responsible for leading the organization to achieve its vision of improving the public’s health and access to affordable care. The foundation is focused on building PA workforce capacity in the areas of mental health and wellness and oral health as part of overall health. It also funds small grants programs to equip and encourage certified PAs and PA students to promote more equitable care.

Allen, a certified PA, also practices at Pocatello Women’s Correctional Center in Pocatello, and previously worked in urgent care. After only two years in practice, he earned his Certificate of Added Qualifications in Psychiatry. He graduated from Midwestern University’s PA program in Glendale Ariz., with a master’s degree in Physician Assistant Studies in 2012. Prior to becoming a certified PA, Allen earned bachelors and masters degrees in Business Administration at Northwest Nazarene University and worked at Micron, Idaho Central Credit Union, and First American Title.

“Todd brings both experience in caring for the mentally ill and business acumen to the nccPA Health Foundation,” said Board Chair Ted Wendel, PhD. “He is ready to effectively contribute to our work, and the PA profession will benefit from his readiness to participate with us. We welcome him to our board.”

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CANS test pilot scheduled for September

*Seth Schreiber*
*Program Manager*

The pace of activity related to the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool is ever increasing as we near our implementation deadlines. There are a number of project updates to share. Planning is currently underway for a CANS test pilot, which is scheduled for September 2017-October 2017. This pilot will involve a larger scope than the initial “proof of concept” pilot for the CANS decision-support algorithm testing, which was completed in October 2016.

The CANS test pilot includes all of the elements of a full-scale statewide deployment of the CANS system. The objective of this test pilot is to make sure that the Idaho CANS tool accurately identifies the child’s most relevant issues in terms of strengths and needs and that the output is useable for the creation of a treatment plan that will match the child’s needs for services and supports. The test pilot will also provide the opportunity to review how the information gathered from the clinical interview is translated into a CANS outcome. The requirements and complexity of the test pilot will require significantly more effort and analysis than the previous “proof of concept” pilot.

The test pilot group will consist primarily of staff from the Division of Behavioral Health’s seven regions, as well as a limited number from our partners in Juvenile Justice (i.e. Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections).

For the test pilot to be a success, we will need the web-based CANS tool to be working. The process for determining everything that is needed for the web-based CANS to work is currently underway. The division is working under very aggressive timelines and is leveraging existing resources to build the CANS web-based system as the most effective and efficient approach to reaching the goal of having a functioning web-based CANS tool that is accessible statewide. The final test is to ensure that the web-based system maintains the capacity to support the very complex needs surrounding the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Project. We will report on the outcomes of the test pilot in the January 2018 quarterly newsletter.

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Behavioral Health Role in Active Shooter Exercise or Real Event in Idaho

*By Ryan Bender, Healthcare Liaison, Public Health, Idaho North Central District*

With a known understanding of the need for mental health resources following all disasters, and a recognized need to coordinate these resources, Public Health – Idaho North Central District brought together 17 mental health professionals from North Central Idaho to attend a course focused on Individual Crisis Intervention and Group Intervention. Following this successful meeting and training, the “Disaster Mental Health Team” was formed as part of Public Health’s North Central Idaho Medical Reserve Corp.

Under the leadership and coordination of Public Health – Idaho North Central District, the North Central Healthcare Coalition, in collaboration with Latah County and the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, held a Hostile Event Full Scale Exercise on Saturday, April 1, in Genesee. The exercise focused on an active
shooter event at Genesee High School. There were over 200 participants, including those from law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, the school district, Public Health, and volunteer agencies. During the exercise, members of the Disaster Mental Health Team were available if the realism of the scenario caused any distress. Volunteers played the part of victims and students placed in lockdown by school staff. “Having support from our Disaster Mental Health Team during exercise play was reassuring as we knew the scenario could be stressful for some of the actors,” said Casey Schooley, exercise coordinator with Public Health-Idaho North Central District. While available to support the response phase during this exercise, the most important role for the Disaster Mental Health Team is during recovery. There will be a future recovery tabletop exercise at Genesee High School. The goal of the exercise is to help identify resources that would assist the community of Genesee to recover if such a horrific event would occur. Public Health will coordinate this exercise with representatives from the school district, community, local government, Red Cross, and behavioral health. Public Health and our North Central Healthcare Coalition recognize the critical importance of having a Disaster Mental Health team trained and ready to respond should a disaster occur in our region.

By BPA Health
In December 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported over 52,000 Americans died of a drug overdose in 2015, the first time the number exceeded 50,000. Of those, 33,091 involved prescription or illicit opioids. According to the data published in CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality report, more than 300,000 Americans have died of an opioid overdose since 2000. Communities throughout the U.S. struggle with the opioid epidemic, and Idaho is no different. The epidemic is serious and costly. For individuals, people lose their jobs, their families, their freedoms, and as the numbers show, at times their lives. The health care and criminal justice costs are increasing and impacting communities, too. So what’s the good news? The good news is that at a federal, state, and local level, leaders are coming together to focus on prevention and treatment, including Idaho. At the federal level, the White House announced Wednesday, March 29, 2017, that it is launching a commission to address the opioid epidemic. In Idaho, the Office of Drug Policy, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and other agencies are working cross-functionally to look at data and put strategies in place. At BPA Health, the network of behavioral health and treatment providers continues to grow. With a focus on prevention and treatment, BPA Health recognizes that strategies may need to be as multi-faced as the epidemic itself. From education and prevention to addiction treatment, it will require community-based initiatives that involve participants and policy makers from a broad representation of contributors.

NOTE: BPA Health is the management services contractor for Idaho’s Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment and RSS network.
In Touch Community Conversation – RESILIENCE Documentary

By Optum Idaho
Optum is partnering with the Idaho Children’s Trust Fund, The Speedy Foundation and the Idaho Federation of Families to bring the highly acclaimed and award winning James Redford documentary RESILIENCE: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope to Idaho.

The one-hour documentary explores the science of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and a new movement to treat and prevent toxic stress. Understood to be one of the leading causes of everything from heart disease and cancer to substance abuse and depression, extremely stressful experiences in childhood can alter brain development and have lifelong effects. RESILIENCE chronicles a movement to prevent childhood trauma, treat toxic stress, and greatly improve the health of children.

The statewide events will have a public screening of the film followed by a panel discussion. There will also be a professional education conference in Boise with work sessions for educators, counselors, and mental and behavioral health care providers. Along with that screening, there will be information and discussion about ACEs and an exclusive conversation with film director James Redford and Walla Walla High School principal, James Sporleder, featured in Paper Tigers. Attendees will leave with ideas on how to continue the discussion on improving the lives of children.

Screenings

Twin Falls, 5/11, Magic Valley Arts Council, 6:30pm
Boise, 5/13, BSU Special Events Center, 10:00am (Professional Education Conference)
Boise, 5/13, BSU Special Events Center, 6:30pm
Fort Hall, 5/17, Shoshone-Bannock Hotel & Event Center, 6:30pm
Lewiston, 5/22, Lewiston High School, 6:30pm PDT

Admission is free. Register at: www.thespeedyfoundation.org/resilience or visit www.optumidaho.com

NOTE: Optum Idaho is Idaho’s Medicaid managed care contractor for Behavioral Health services.

Opportunities to Get Involved

Youth Empowerment Services (YES)
Learn more about the YES project and opportunities to get involved and ask questions at YES.idaho.gov.

Peer Services
You can now visit Recovery Idaho’s website for updates on Recovery Coach training.

Learn more about Certified Peer Support Specialists and Certified Family Support Partners at this site.

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